

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO /SECSTATE WASHDC 2990

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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TAGS: PFOR, EG, UR, XF

SUBJ: SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS: THE GOOD OLD DAYS

1. SUMMAYR. IN TWO PRESS COMMENTARIES ON THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF NASSER'S DEATH, THE SOVIETS HAVE IMPLIED THAT THEY ARE NOT WHOLLY PLEASED WITH HIS SUCCESSOR AND HAVE STRESSED THE BENFITS TO THE ARAB WORLD OF CLOSE TIES TO THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMAYR.

2. IZVESTIYA (SEPTEMBER 27) CARRIED A COMMENTARY BY V. ILYUSHIN CALLED "GOLRIOUS SON OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE" WHICH STRESSED NASSER'S ROLE AS A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER
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WHO OPPOSED IMPERIALSIM, WHO SOUGHT TO REFORM EGYPT

ON A NON-CAPITALIST BASIS, AND WHO RECOGNIZED THE ADVANTAGES OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S.S.R. HE UNDERSTOOD, SAYS IZVESTIYA, THE NECESSITY OF LIQUIDATING IMPERIALIST INFLUENCE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE. THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZES THE ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE AID RENDERED THE ARAB WORLD BY THE U.S.S.R. IT NOTES THAT A "SHARP" STRUGGLE IS NOW GOING ON IN EGYPT OVER THE VALIDITY OF NASSER'S POLITICAL LEGACY; WHILE THE WORKING CLASSES SUPPORT IT, REACTION AND IMPERIALISM ARE ATTEMPTING TO "EMASCULATE" IT.

3. A PRAVDA COMMENTARY (SEPTEMBER 28), BY P. DEMCHENKO, FOLLOWED THE SAME LINE: NASSER UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION. IN ECONOMIC POLICY, HE FOLLOWED A PROGRESSIVE COURSE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS. BUT A "FIERCE STRUGGLE" IS NOW BEING WAGED OVER THE VALIDITY OF HIS POLICIES. RIGHTIST CIRCLES OPPOSE HIS CONCEPT OF "SOCIALIST FREEDOM" FOR WORKERS AND CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE ARTICLE SIDES WITH NASSER'S POLICIES, SAYS THAT THEY HOLD TRUE TODAY, "AND NOT ONLY FOR EGYPT." IT CONCLUDES THAT A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE SOVIET UNION WILL "WITHOUT DOUBT" BE IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES.

4. COMMENT. THESE ARTICLES ARE, IN PART, STRAIGHT MEMORIAL PIECES TO THE DEAD LEADER. BUT THEY IMPLY SOME DISPLEASURE WITH HIS SUCCESSOR BY VIRTUALLY IGNORING HIM (SADAT IS MENTIONED ONLY BRIEFLY IN EACH ARTICLE), THUS IMPLYING THAT HIS EFFORTS IN THE "STRUGGLES" THEY MENTION ARE NOT ALL THEY SHOULD BE. THE FOCUS ON HEROIC NASSER AND THE POINTS OF HIS RECORD THEY CHOOSE TO EMPHASIZE CLEARLY ARE INTENDED TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS TO HIS SUCCESSOR AND TO OTHER LEADERS IN THE ARAB WORLD THAT THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE MINDFUL OF THE LARGESSE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION CAN BRING THEM.

5. THE ARTICLES POINT UP SOVIET CONCERN OVER A LOSS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFLUENCE IN THE ARAB WORLD, A CONCERN WHICH STEMS NOT ONLY FROM THEIR EXCLUSION FROM RECENT NEGOTIATIONS BUT PERHAPS ALSO FROM THE REALIZATION THAT THE NEW ARAB WORLD, HEAVILY ARMED WITH PETRO-DOLLARS, MAY NOT BE AS EASY TO ENTICE WITH PROMISES OF SOVIET AID AS IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST.
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